(c) and (d) The Association, by virtue of being an Inter-Universities Organisation, acts as a Bureau of information and facilitates communication, co-ordination and mutual consultation amongst universities in the following areas:

(i) Research into Higher Education
(ii) Equivalence & Information Service
(iii) Youth Affairs
(iv) Sports
(v) University News Journal
(vi) Library & documentation
(vii) Publications.

No formalities are prescribed.

Use of Chemicals for Ripening of Apples

*498. SHRI LAKKHIRAM AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that apple growers of Himachal Pradesh and other States are using chemicals for fast ripening of apples;

(b) if so, what effects it has on the health of people who eat the chemically-treated apples;

(c) whether chemicals used for apples affect the trees also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes. Sir. The apple growers have started use of 'Ethephon' for fruit ripening and colour improvement in apples.

(b) The apple fruits treated with 'Ethephon' with recommended doses do not have any adverse effect on human health.

(c) and (d) There is no adverse effect on the trees with the application of 'Ethephon' if the recommended doses are used. However, with excessive doses, leaf and fruitfall may occur.

Subsidy To Fertilizer Industry

*499. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise details of subsidy to the fertilizer industry producing urea, phosphatic and potassic fertilizers, for the last three years;

(b) whether the subsidy being provided to the fertilizer industry would be diverted to the farmers;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) who are the real beneficiaries of fertilizer subsidy?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Subsidy is paid by the Government only on fertilizers under Statutory Price Control, namely Urea. the subsidy paid on Urea during last three years is indicated below:

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Subsidy paid
1993-94	4398.97
1994-95	5241.00
1995-96	6235.00

In addition, Government of India is paying concession on sale of decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers to the farmers. An annexure indicating State-wise concession paid during last three years is enclosed. [*See Appendix 178, Annexure No. 77*]

(b) and (c) Subsidy/concession is meant for the farmers only. Since there is no mechanism to give it to the farmers directly, it is paid through Manufacturers/ suppliers, who claim the amount of concession from the Government after making the sales to the farmers.

(d) Farmers are the real beneficiaries of fertilizer subsidy/concession.